



City of Hampton, VA

Meeting Minutes

City Council

22 Lincoln Street
Hampton, VA 23669
www.hampton.gov

Linda Curtis
W. H. "Billy" Hobbs, Jr.
Will Moffett
Chris Snead
Christopher G. Stuart
Donnie R. Tuck
George E. Wallace, Mayor

Staff:
Mary Bunting, City Manager
Vanessa T. Valldejuli, City Attorney
Katherine K. Glass, CMC, Clerk of Council

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 8th Floor, City Hall

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

GEORGE E. WALLACE PRESIDED

PRESENT: Linda Curtis, W. H. "Billy" Hobbs, Jr., Will Moffett, Chris Snead, Christopher G. Stuart, Donnie R. Tuck

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Tammy Lee, Deputy Clerk of Council, read the protocol for the Public Comment Period.

Mr. Hugh Bassette, President of the Old North Hampton Community Organization, 117 Rip Rap Road, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: Back in January, a young man was found over by YH Thomas, shot and killed, which brings us to the issue of youth violence. There are certain communities that – well you appointed a board with Mr. Brown, but I think Mr. Moffett and Ms. Curtis took a trip somewhere and that was the subject, is that correct? We need to move and do something. We cannot sit back and watch this happen and just cross our fingers every year and hope it goes down, because it's not. Hampton is becoming a fairly good sized city and it will have the problems of fairly good sized cities, and youth violence is one of them. The strange thing is that in most cities it happens in certain neighborhoods, but in Hampton it happens all over, not just in one low income – we don't have no ghettos, so our violence – we had, what, one in Coliseum Crossings, one over by the carnival by the Coliseum, a couple up on Woodland Park, and we had a shootout in the parking lot of a Wal-Mart. It's not like you can move into a gated community or Farmington or one of our better neighborhoods and feel like, "I'm safe here." The gentleman that got killed in Newport News, the 71 year old deacon, he was on his way home, bringing dinner to his wife in Hampton. So you can't stay behind those gated communities all the time, you've got to come out and go to church, your kids got to go to school and those things. But we need to make a move on it, because that is a problem that has the potential to destroy this City. If it continues, people are not going to want to raise their kids here, people who can afford to are going to move. When that happens, then you don't have the consumer base to support your businesses, and your businesses will start to close. Then you're going to have to hire

more police. In order to hire more police, you're going to have to raise taxes, and you wind up in a downward cycle that once it starts, it's hard to get out of. It hasn't really started in Hampton yet, but you have to move on it sooner. One of the things that I heard through the grapevine is that you're still talking about closing Old Hampton Community Center. You can't close the community center in a low income minority neighborhood and think that that's going to help in curbing youth violence. It's not. I realize that it's underutilized, it's dilapidated, but you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. You either fix it, get rid of the pool, fix it and put a new community center there. That community needs a community center more than a lot of others. I'm going to leave you with an article you might have read because it was in the Daily Press about this guy Steven Kast. I guess he lives in Poquoson because he's on their School Board. He talks about the importance of community neighborhood centers. You haven't showed your budget yet, but like I said, Gladys Knight told me I heard it through the grapevine that once again you were going to try to close Old Hampton Community Center, and I think that would be a drastic mistake. Also, hopefully you're going to adjourn this meeting honoring one of our prominent citizens who just passed, Mr. Rudy Langford. Thank you.

Mayor Wallace noted that there will be a report coming from the Committee for Youth Violence in the near future. He stated that in conjunction with that report, there will be some actions from the information received from the two Councilmembers' recent trip. He also noted that Steve Kast is the Director of the Boys & Girls Club.

Mr. David Dietrich, 139 Wilderness Road, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: Just like to start with a quick recap on my meeting with the Mayor. We had a good discussion on obligations of the City Council to protect its citizens and discussed how the Constitution trumps laws that are in conflict with the Constitution. Federal government has no authority to determine when to circumvent the Constitution. States must exert their sovereignty when they believe Constitutional rights are infringed. In this case, I'm referring to the National Defense Authorization Act. State Virginia Code provides that no agency of the Commonwealth, political subdivision of the Commonwealth, employee of either acting in his official capacity shall knowingly aid an agency of the Armed Forces of the United States in the detention of any citizen pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. Local government should uphold State before Federal law. I request that you pass a resolution to this effect. Three states, thirteen counties and thirteen cities across the Nation have already taken this action. I will provide the Mayor, at his request, with a clear explanation and resolution request. The most important government mission, local government included, is to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty. Thomas Jefferson said, "The purpose of government is to enable the people of the Nation to live in safety and happiness. Government exists for the interest of the governed, not for the governors." Please show us that you're concerned about our welfare and freedom. Last, I'd like to finish with something on the City budget. It seems that the Hampton City government and School Board are taking the wrong approach. The only options you seem to see are increasing property taxes or cutting programs. There are certainly other viable options. What about giving tax credits to businesses to fund programs that are underfunded? What about taxing government benefits that are currently not taxed? Homeowners should not bear the brunt for every tax increase that you propose. There are a lot of people on pensions, fixed income, that have to suck up these tax increases and that is not a good thing for the City. Why do you need the programs you say you need? Line by line justification of each program should be the first order of business. Residents of Hampton should know why these programs are being funded. And I don't appreciate the

use of the term "investment" when it's my money you're taking. Investment is what I do with my own money. Taxing is what you do with my money. George Washington said, "We must consult our means rather than our wishes." Thank you very much.

Ms. Michele Yacobi, 82 Algonquin Road, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I'm concerned about taxes, too. The recent increase has been a hardship on my family. We don't go to the movies every month, and now we don't go but maybe once a year. I've cut back on almost everything extracurricular I can possibly cut back for me and my young children, and now this year I will not join the pool. I'm concerned about the wetlands, because flooding is a cost to all of us. I would like to see more sidewalks. For instance, you spent money on speed bumps on Chesapeake Avenue. I didn't say that was okay. I live in Wythe. I think money could be spent better on communities, like the senior citizens, taking care of our youth, sidewalks, bringing people and tourism to downtown Hampton. What are you doing to bring industry here? I feel like I'm taxed. I've lived here eight years, and I've been here before. My grandparents are here. It's getting harder and harder to live here. I lived better eight years ago here in Wythe than I do today. What is the future of Hampton? What are you all doing with keeping healthy families, families that want to invest here, stay here, retire here? What are you doing to keep us? What are you doing to bring in business here? I feel, like, we're just taxed to death. I feel like it's a hodgepodge downtown. What is your goal? To me downtown Hampton should be like Williamsburg, as beautiful as Williamsburg. We have so much history here, so much to offer. I just want to know what the long term goals are, because now I feel like I won't be able to retire and live here, at the rate that things are going now. Or safe for my children to live here. That's all. Thank you.

Mr. James Yacobi, 7 Maynard Street, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I'm glad to be back; I haven't been back here for two or three years. I hope I don't take this long again. The last thing that I did before the Council was to ask that they make a very strong effort to drain, dredge, Indian River and Robinson Creek. Everyone seemed in agreement, it was long overdue, they were going to get to it and they were going to get back to me. Well, this is three years now. Nobody ever got back to me. I want to know, where do we stand on the list of projects? Why does it keep getting bumped down? Something's happening. Maybe it got bumped off. Maybe it's not even there anymore. The second thing I wanted to bring to the Council's attention is going to require some work on the City Manager's efforts, the flood insurance program. Probably the worst piece of legislation ever written, particularly for Hampton. We have homes now that can't be sold because you've got to add on to the prospective buyer, "Well, I'm sorry, sir, but this is going to be an extra \$4,000 a year." Or whatever it is, they're losing sales and we're losing the ability to maintain our maritime water living. It's a ridiculous tax and I want everyone to think about the fact that somebody way away from us made up this law. We have no idea, I certainly don't have any idea, but it disturbs me a lot that somebody way away from me can put a penalty on me and I don't even know where my money's going and for whom. I'd say, this year the Mississippi will flood again, are we going to pay for that, too? Because there's an ungodly number of disasters ahead of us. I think we can take care of ourselves. We bought the homes all around Hampton for risk, our risk. We pay home insurance. If the thing washes away, we rebuild it if we want to. It's a little strange because we have no power over this, and it can grow, believe me, it has grown since the program started. My insurance has doubled. I would appreciate somebody on the Council looking into it, and make it a City project. It's not just me, it's not just one area. I appreciate your time, thank you.

Mayor Wallace stated that someone with the City Manager's staff would meet with him about Indian River.

Mr. Edwin Boone, 48 Snow Street, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: Recently, I mentioned at the City Council meetings that a newspaper article in the Daily Press said Hampton is the murder capital of the Tidewater area. At the time I mentioned it, Mr. Wallace laughed about Hampton being the murder capital of the Tidewater area. This is for you politicians, you preachers, you leadership, and you voters. How can you in good faith look at yourself in the mirror and endorse the man, because this is election time, looking for endorsements and donations. How can you in good faith look yourself in the mirror and endorse the man and give donations to a man that's running for office after he laughed about your kids getting murdered in the streets. Recently, also, the former Mayor and the Vice Mayor was on the Fort Monroe Board. The Mayor of Hampton and the Vice Mayor of Hampton, they were on the Fort Monroe Board, Fort Monroe is in Hampton. They got kicked off the Fort Monroe Board and replaced, they were replaced, one was white, the other one minority. So, it was replaced with two white individuals. I asked Mr. Wallace, Hampton is 51% minority, isn't there at least one minority in the City of Hampton that could've replaced you on the Fort Monroe Board. And he said no. These are the same people he's coming to for endorsements and for your vote and your contributions. Right now, there's six Councilmembers and the Mayor. That's seven positions. Five positions open for reelection. When the Mayor was here, it was always six against one. There's one that stood up for the people. So since there's six Councilmembers and one Mayor, and there's five positions up for reelection, therefore there's two left that's not up for reelection. There's two that's out of the six that was in lockstep. They already have two already in lockstep for the vote. All they need is two more, which is two that's already and two with this election, they have their four votes which would be a majority of the seven. We have one that voted, that was voted against. I stood up for the last five years fighting for the poor man, and they even sic the Sheriff on me several times. We have competition with the one, the Mayor. So basically, we have our three votes and all we need is one. And they need two. People you have to get out and vote. You do make a difference, otherwise, like Wallace said, Hampton is going to hell in a hand basket. Thank you.

Ms. Kendyl Crawford, 132 Ivy Home Road, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I would like to start off by expressing my gratitude to this body for the proclamation that I was given two years ago as a result of winning the Marshall Scholarship. The reason I am here today, though, revolves around my concern as a resident of Hampton about climate change. As you know, Hampton is extremely vulnerable to increased storm surges and sea level rise. As we have seen with past storms, like Hurricane Isabel, we are susceptible to extensive damage. The combination of sea level rise, our flat and low topography, land subsidence and our coastal infrastructure and real estate makes Hampton Roads the second most vulnerable region in the US to flooding from storm surges. On a more personal note, my family owns several properties in the area and we, anecdotally over the past 40 years or so, have witnessed worsening floods. The year 2012 was the second most extreme year on record for our Nation, with record heat across the US, wildfires, drought, and Superstorm Sandy that caused about \$65 billion in damage. We know that extreme weather negatively impacts public health, especially vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and the poor. Carbon pollution has been identified as the biggest driver of climate change with the largest proportion coming from electricity generation. In response to all this, last year, President Obama released a Climate Action Plan which

focuses on cutting carbon pollution from power plants, increasing energy efficiency, and supporting clean energy. The President's plan also emphasizes adaptation by supporting climate resilient investments and providing climate preparedness tools to state, local and private sector leaders, among other measures. I would like to applaud the climate adaptation steps that the City has taken thus far, including the Peninsula Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Hampton Comprehensive Waterways Management Plan. I would also like to present an opportunity to the City Council. The Virginia Climate Action Campaign is in the process of seeking additional public officials to sign on to a letter to President Obama. The letter supports the Climate Action Plan, which addresses climate change by limiting carbon pollution and adapting to predicted impacts. Already 47 elected officials from around the State, including Councilman Tuck, have signed the letter. The City of Alexandria has even passed a resolution supporting the Climate Action Plan. In conclusion, I ask you all to consider taking an act of climate leadership by lending your support to the letter. Thank you very much.

Councilman Stuart asked if someone from the City Manager's staff could speak to Ms. Crawford about the high school and college internship programs that are part of the Safe & Clean Initiative.

Mr. Aubrey Baker, 43 Waters Edge Circle, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I'm here with my grandson Keegan, who is a Boy Scout, and this is a requirement for his merit badge. I thought I'd take this opportunity to at least ask for some action. I live at the far end of the King Street corridor, right where it meets Langley Air Force Base. My only access to the outside world is King Street, and yet from the intersection of Little Back River Road to the entrance to Mercury Boulevard is a gauntlet, a series of speed bumps. It has been that way for the better part of the year, possibly over a year. There's a lot of construction going on and I'm not really quite sure what the construction is doing because some days there's a flurry of activity and there's inactivity for the better part of a week, sometimes longer, then there's a flurry of activity, then there's none. What I see is, in the middle, is they're tearing up the road, replacing it with dirt, and then every now and then they dig up that old dirt and put it back again. I'm not quite sure what's going on. It seems to be taking an awfully long time. I saw what you all did on Pembroke Avenue, it's great, and it didn't take anything like the time it's taking King Street. All I would ask is somebody take a look and see what's going on and possibly get this done. It's really going an awfully long time. Thank you for the opportunity to speak, I really appreciate it. Thank you.

Mayor Wallace asked Mr. Keegan Baker to step forward and introduce himself.

Mr. Keegan Baker, 43 Waters Edge Circle, approached the dais and made the following statement: I'm a Star Scout going for Life in about two weeks. I'm a sophomore at Kecoughtan High School.

Mayor Wallace presented Mr. Keegan Baker with a City lapel pin and City coin.

City Manager Mary Bunting stated that she would be glad to meet with the Bakers to update them on the King Street construction during the recess.

Mayor Wallace noted that there were no more speakers signed up and called for any additional speakers from the audience.

Prior to adjournment, Councilman Stuart requested a moment of silence for the passing of Rudy Langford.

ADJOURNMENT

George E. Wallace
Mayor

Katherine K. Glass, CMC
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council _____